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TO: The Deputy Secretary

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THROUGH: C - Timothy E. Wirth

FROM: RP - Phyllis Oakley, Acting
HA - John Shattuck JSUBJECT: Rwandan Refugees in Tanzania -- Ngara and Beyond

Bureau for Refugee Programs DAS Brunson McKinley accompanied Assistant Secretary Shattuck on his mission to East Africa. McKinley looped back through Nairobi to meet with the refugee relief community representatives and to visit the camp at Ngara, Tanzania, where 200,000 Rwandan refugees flooded across the Rusumo Falls Bridge some ten days ago. A summary of his observations follows.

The Refugees

Camped in the open in a deserted corner of Tanzania, the refugees are uncomfortable but so far reasonably healthy. Complete family units are the rule. Some even came in cars; most have radios. Many have been displaced before and know the ropes of camp life. Ninety five percent are Hutus. A few of the Tutsis among the refugees have returned home as the entire Southeast is under the control of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Prospects for Additional Outflows

Across the Rusumo Falls Bridge in Rwanda, the RPF Forces are bending over backwards to facilitate humanitarian operations and create the impression of discipline and competence. The RPF seems to have put an end to mass killings and gross abuses, though it may have carried out summary executions. Rwandan Hutu refugees nevertheless continue to emerge up- and downstream of the bridge, uncertain of the future under RPF occupation and encouraged by Rwandan Government radio to fear the worst. If southeast Rwanda stays quiet, some refugees may decide to return home. The crops are reportedly good in southeast Rwanda and conditions at Ngara will not get a lot better soon. The RPF has offered to send emissaries into the camp to encourage repatriation. Even so, camp management is not counting on the population diminishing any time soon. If RPF forces advance

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towards the south and west, more Hutus will flee in anticipation of their arrival. Some will get into Tanzania, but it is likely that most will hit up against the borders of Burundi and Zaire.

The Relief Response

The international humanitarian response has been rapid and effective. In fact, the Red Cross and the World Food Program were at Ngara ahead of the refugee influx, working to set up cross-border feeding into Rwanda. The food-stocks for that operation went to the newly arrived refugees. (The Red Cross will restart cross-border in the next few days.) The UN High Commissioner for Refugees had alertly positioned an emergency response team at Ngara as soon as she found out about the concentration of displaced persons north of the bridge. Ten days into the emergency, problems are many and severe, but a first-class group of experts from the agencies and non-governmental organizations is in place to deal with them.

The immediate food and supply pipeline for Ngara via the airfield at Mwanza, on Lake Victoria in Tanzania, is barely adequate. The expected arrival at Mwanza Wednesday of the first DOD-airlifted UNHCR supplies will allow stockpiling there. The truck route up to Ngara is more problematic, especially for the further three or four weeks the rains will last. Food is another concern. The World Food Program has identified 58,000 metric tons of food for the Rwanda-Burundi emergency, enough to feed 1.2 million people for two months. That sounds impressive, but the food is as far away as China and moving it in Africa quickly is just not possible, given road conditions. Long- and short-haul airlift will probably be required. Relief workers believe they will need cash for immediate food purchases in the region to fill in gaps.

Next Steps

The international humanitarian community is handling the Rwanda-Burundi crisis well, but will not be able to accomplish much more so long as the fighting continues in Rwanda. If things worsen, the humanitarians will be swamped. The Shattuck mission recommendations -- cease-fire, international presence at the borders, human rights monitoring and investigations -- are probably the only way to contain and prevent a larger and more costly tragedy.

The best -- perhaps the only -- way to deal with the anticipated Hutu flight before it spills over into Burundi is to have an international humanitarian presence in place in the border districts of Rwanda.

The High Commissioner for Refugees and both Red Crosses are coming out with new appeals for this emergency. Donors will need to find additional resources. We will probably have to make another call on the President's emergency fund (ERMA).

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